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How Reds Gain in Indonesia— Key Leader Interviewed

By John Hughes
Staff Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor
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There now can be little doubt that the Communists have stepped up their campaign in Indonesia.

In recent weeks a wave of Communist fomented and exploited anti-American harassment has swept the country.

American libraries and consulates have been the main targets. Next may come commercial American airliners and ships and perhaps the big American rubber plantations.

Parallel to this the Indonesian Communist Party has been busy steamrolling over its political opposition and consolidating its position for whatever lies ahead.

Peking Influence

For its international inspiration the Indonesian Communist Party draws upon Peking—much to the chagrin of Moscow. The pace of the party's campaign has quickened noticeably since the Indonesian visit in late November and early December of Chinese Foreign Minister Marshal Chen Yi.

But the key man in the campaign, and the one who could

give the signal plunging Indonesia into chaos overnight, is Dipa Nusantara Aidit.

Mr. Aidit is leader of the Indonesian Communist Party. It is the biggest Communist Party in the non-Communist world.

Under President Sukarno, the party occupies a legitimate role in government. Mr. Aidit is not satisfied with that representation.

Bigger Role Sought

"What party is ever satisfied?" he asked this correspondent in a recent brief interview.

"We think the strength of our party entitles us to a bigger say in government than we have now."

The prospect not referred to but which is widely speculated on in Jakarta these days is that the Communist Party might attempt a coup should President Sukarno be removed for any reason from the political scene.

Although he would certainly deny it, the man who would necessarily have to give the signal for that coup is Mr. Aidit.

A good-looking man with flying hair, he laughed easily several times as we talked.

"How do you find the political situation in Indonesia?" he asked this correspondent.

"Confusing," I replied.

"That's because you're not looking at things the right way," he said. "Everything's simple here if you see it from a Marxist-Leninist point of view."

Nevertheless, from a pure Marxist-Leninist point of view, the Indonesian Communist Party under Mr. Aidit's guidance has achieved its success to date via some strangely unorthodox tactics.

Ideology Bent

For instance, it subscribes to President Sukarno's five basic tenets included in a formula known as Pantjasila. The first of those tenets is a belief in God. And in the Indonesian Communist Party there are many practicing Moslems.

Then again, though there is no question that the party's ultimate goal is complete Communist control of Indonesia, it is participating in a government with a curious jumble of parties and political movements including Moslem parties.

Yet another contradiction is that while it stands for the abolition of private ownership, the party machine seems large-

ly run by the small bourgeoisie whose interests logically run counter to Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Bending ideology around built-in Indonesian realities has apparently however proved profitable. Today the Indonesian Communist Party claims a membership of three million.

The Communist peasants union (BTI) is supposed to have 8½ million members while the Communist trade union organization (SOBSI) has 3½ million. Then there is a Communist youth organization of about two million members and a women's organization of roughly the same size. All this makes a following of about 19 million members.

One Man's Reason

It is among the peasants that the Communists are working hardest. The Communists are pushing land reform vigorously. In mid-1964 they backed a peasant revolt on the land issue in central Java.

Prior to this they were active in an agricultural research project covering all Java—most densely populated island in Indonesia. Mr. Aidit himself led the team which spent four months in the countryside.

Much of the Communist suc-

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cess has come from straight-forward but carefully calculated economic assistance to peasants.

For example, a relative of a leading politician recently announced he had joined the Communists. The politician journeyed into the country to ask his relative—a farmer—the reason why.

"I was in my fields when a man stopped to ask me my

problems. The problems are always the same at this time of year—how to get money for seed and planting. Usually I have to borrow and by the time the moneylenders are through it costs me 50 percent interest.

"A few days later my visitor returned. He lent me all I needed at 5 percent interest, he was the representative of the Communist Party, and the party lent me the money.

"All my life I have been in debt and my father and grandfather before me. Now for the first time I am free, and the Communists have made it so. And you ask me why I have decided to support them?"

Great Potential

Of course these Communist loans are not made indiscriminately. This man was certainly picked because he is a leader in his community. Other loans are similarly made to people of influence and stature from whom the Communists may profit most.

Perhaps the best thing working for the Communists is Indonesia's wretched economic situation.

People are poor with little prospect of becoming affluent. Indonesia has great potential,

but the present regime has failed to exploit it.

Wages are low. Prices are high. Even many honest men have been compelled to turn to corruption and graft to feed their families.

All this sounds like an ominously familiar breeding ground for communism.

The Communist Party itself seems affluent enough with no financial problems. As this correspondent talked with Mr. Aidit, builders clanged and banged away in the background on the whole block the party is building for a new headquarters.

It is widely speculated that some of the party's funds are made available by Peking. Nevertheless it was the arrival of the Soviet Ambassador in a shiny black Mercedes that terminated our interview. "Print that in your newspaper," said Mr. Aidit with a smile. "Print that I receive the Soviet Ambassador."

However, he did not tell me what I discovered later—that he was receiving the Soviet Ambassador to tell him the Indonesian Party would not attend the upcoming meeting in Moscow of world Communist parties because China would not be there.